

The IDVA Update



Mitch Daniels - Governor
Tom Applegate - Director

July 2006

The Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs Newsletter

Summer Edition



Pictured are, from left, Bill Fulton, Bill Harger, Randy Huntzinger and Cindy Pfleging



Deputy Director Jim Holdeman pulls out of the Harley Davidson parking at the start of the ride to DC.

WWII Veterans Honored

On April 29, 2006 the Noblesville Alumni Association, in coordination with the School Board and Administration, honored four World War II veterans with their high school diplomas.

In 1945, these three men and one woman were in their senior year at Noblesville High School, when they were either drafted into the service or quit school to join the service and serve their country.

On this April 29th Saturday night, with over 400 people attending the dinner and ceremony, Bill Fulton, Bill Harger, George Huntzinger and Rosylann K. Long finally received their High School Diploma, complete with a picture of the old Noblesville High School. The diplomas were presented by Dr. Lynn Lehman, Ed. D, and Mrs Aneltia Petty, the NHS principal.

Mr. Huntzinger's diploma was accepted by his son, Randy, and Rosylann Long's diploma was accepted by Cindy Pfleging, Noblesville High School Alumni Association board member.

The four were escorted to the podium by members of the American Legion Post 45 Color Guard. Bill Fulton, with a tear in his eye, remarked, "I've waited 61 years for this. Thank you."

Deputy Director and State Service Officer Participate in annual Rolling Thunder

Deputy Director Jim Holdeman and State Service Officer Jon Brinkley both had the honor of participating in the annual Rolling Thunder trek to Washington DC over the Memorial Day weekend. This was the first time that Jim had taken part in the ride. Of his ride Jim said, "It was a memorable experience, especially visiting the Vietnam Wall, I had a great time, met a lot of super people". Jim said that he looked forward to participating in the ride again in the future and this time plans to bring his family along so that they too can enjoy the experience.

Rolling Thunder Inc's major function is to publicize the POW/MIA issue. To educate the public of the fact that many American prisoners of war were left behind after all past wars and to help correct the past and to protect future veterans from being left behind should they become prisoners of war-missing in action. Rolling Thunder members are committed to helping disabled veterans from all wars.



State's First Full-Time Women Veterans Coordinator Named

Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs (IDVA) Director Tom Applegate announced on June 6, 2006 that Kristin A. Bertrand has been appointed as the state's first full-time Women Veterans Coordinator.

"Kris is a welcome addition to the IDVA staff," Applegate said. "She brings experience to the position and to a program which has received little emphasis from this Department. It's a program which will need to be built from the ground up. I see good things happening for Hoosier women veterans who, in the past, have been pretty much invisible. We want them to know they are no longer the invisible veterans."

Kris is a veteran of the U.S. Navy, where she served from 1989 to 1993. She has a BSW (Bachelors in Social Work) from Indiana University School of Social Work, class of 2005, and is currently attending graduate school via distance learning through the University of Wisconsin-Stout in Menomonie, Wisconsin.

Kris will perform as the State Women Veterans Coordinator in addition to her duties as a State Service Officer, helping Hoosier veterans, their dependents and survivors with their claims and applications for state and federal veterans' benefits. In her role as the Women Veterans Coordinator she will also ensure that all Hoosier women veterans have equitable access to federal and state services and benefits.

The goals of the Indiana Women Veterans Program are to:

1. Perform outreach to improve Hoosier women veterans' awareness of eligibility for federal and state veterans' services and benefits;

2. Assess the needs of women veterans with respect to improving the Women Veterans Program;
3. Make recommendations to the Director of IDVA to improve benefits and services;
4. Review programs, research projects, and other initiatives designed to address or meet the needs of Indiana's women veterans;
5. Incorporate women veterans' issues in the Department's strategic planning; and
6. Participate in national forums and committees for women veterans.

The program will provide assistance to women who served in the U.S. Armed Forces and forces incorporated as part of the U.S. Armed Forces, such as mobilized National Guard and Reserves, and who were discharged under conditions other than dishonorable.

IDVA Annual Conference a Success



The week of June 26 - 29 saw the gathering of the county veteran service officers for their annual training conference. The conference was kicked off on Monday with a golf outing at the Pleasant Run Golf Course. The outing was attended by 35 individuals including deputy director Jim Holdeman, and state service officers Jon Brinkley and Kris Bertrand.

Of the 91 counties, 83 were in attendance at the conference which was held at the Marriott East at 21st and Shadeland. There were ten new service officers in attendance at this year's conference. Welcome aboard! The speaker at this year's banquet was Brigadier General J. Stewart Goodwin from the Indiana War Memorial, other speakers included were the directors or their representatives from the VA Medical Centers.

State Receives Grant to Boost Job Training, Placement Services for Veterans

INDIANAPOLIS (June 30, 2006) -- The Indiana Department of Workforce Development was awarded a grant of \$750,000 from the U.S. Department of Labor to provide an array of career and job services to veterans residing in a 25-county area of the state.

Under the grant, the state will provide outreach, intake, pre-enrollment assessment, job placement service, job training, counseling, mentoring, supportive services and other assistance to Hoosier veterans. The grant supplements services already available to Hoosier veterans from the U.S. Department of Labor and the Department of Workforce Development.

"The goal of this program is to serve 375 veterans and ultimately place 244 into meaningful employment," said Ron Stiver, Commissioner of the Department of Workforce Development. "Our veterans have served the country well, and they deserve all the help we can provide to help place them into the workforce with meaningful jobs."

Indiana is one of twelve states receiving a Veterans Workforce Investment Program grant. The federal program provides funding to meet the training and employment needs of veterans with service-connected disabilities, veterans who have significant barriers to employment, veterans who served on active duty during a war or in a campaign, and recently separated veterans. The two-year grant provides funds for the first year, with second year funding available if the state meets performance standards and funds are available.

Funds were awarded on a competitive basis to state and local workforce investment boards, local public agencies, and nonprofit organizations.

The grant was awarded to the state for three economic growth regions, serving central, north central and north east Indiana. Counties to be served under the grant include Adams, Allen, Boone, DeKalb, Elkhart, Fulton, Grant, Hamilton, Hancock, Hendricks, Huntington, Johnson, Kosciusko, LaGrange, Madison, Marion, Marshall, Morgan, Noble, St. Joseph, Shelby, Steuben, Wabash, Wells, and Whitley.

The Indiana Department of Workforce Development is charged with continually improving the Hoosier workforce by assisting companies to create new jobs and

improve worker skills. The agency offers a variety of training and educational grants, partners with Indiana's 26 WorkOne employment centers, administers the unemployment insurance system, provides labor market information, assists employers with preparing workers for layoffs and closures and operates a statewide job placement service. For more information visit the agency website at www.workforce.IN.gov

Two WorkOne Offices Rewarded for Service to Veterans

By: Phil Johnson, DWD Summer Intern

On June 23, 2006, two WorkOne offices were recognized for their commitment to Indiana veterans. WorkOne of Auburn was recognized as the Large Office of the Year and WorkOne of Madison recognized as Small Office of the Year by the Veterans of Foreign War of Indiana.

An awards ceremony was held at the beginning of the VFW state convention, at the Adam's Mark Hotel in Indianapolis. The conference began with an introduction of special guests by VFW state commander Ron Martin, he was followed by a girl's competition drill team. Following the drill team Bruce Redman of the United States Department of Labor, introduced the awards.

"I really appreciate the VFW for supporting these local offices," Redman said. "They're working hard to help veterans get jobs." Redman added that there were several offices that excelled in veteran's services and that it was hard to decide who most deserved the awards.

Scott Showen staff member of the Auburn office who served in the army during the 1970's in Germany and Korea accepted the award for Large Office of the year. He said that being a veteran gives him a unique perspective on aiding fellow veterans and made this award satisfying for him and his office.

Jean Voyles and George Manek of the Madison WorkOne office accepted the award for Small Office of the Year.

"I think this is great for the state and for our office," said Voyles. "It shows we've worked very hard for veterans."

"It validates to not just me but my co-workers everything that we're doing as an office," Manek said.

The awards are based on a recommendation to the VFW given by the Department of Labor which determines

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the number of veterans being serviced by each office. According to VFW Employment chair Michael Lovett, the award has been around for a long time because following times of war there is usually a need for veterans services.

“When we got back from Vietnam all the good paying jobs were gone. With what they give back to their country we need veterans preference,” Lovett said. “[Madison and Auburn] have exceeded all other offices in performance and placement, they’re active in their communities in veteran’s issues, they really have gotten opportunities out to our veterans.”

The winning offices were recognized in front of the convention and presented with certificates.



What I Feel When I Look Up at The American Flag

Commentary by Shelby Muehlenthaler
5th grader, Tommy's Road Elementary

6/13/2006 - SEYMOUR-JOHNSON AIR FORCE BASE, N.C. (AFPN) -- When I look at the American flag, I see something beautiful. I feel so many different things such as honor, patriotism, freedom, pride, safety and thankfulness. I also think of our service members.

I feel honor when I look up at the American flag because I am able to live here in America and live freely. We have freedom of speech, freedom of religion and freedom of thought, and I don't have to worry about anyone telling me how to live.

Men and women have fought for our beautiful country for hundreds of years. I can't help but think of those special people when I look at the flag. My dad is one of those special people that I think about because he also

fights for America and for the freedom that we have each and every day. I feel so much pride for him and what he does and he makes me feel safe.

I remember going to a funeral of a family friend and co-worker of my dad's. There was an American flag draped over his coffin. The flag reminded me of his deep patriotism and the sacrifices he made.

When I look up at the American flag, I think of everything that has made this country the way it is today -- honorable, patriotic and full of pride. The service members have given the flag meaning by the every-day sacrifices they make. I look up at the American flag and it makes me proud to be an American.

Editor's note: Shelby Muehlenthaler, a 5th grade student at Tommy's Road Elementary, and daughter of Lt Col Dave Muehlenthaler, wrote an essay titled "What I Feel When I Look Up At The American Flag" which was submitted to the local Elks Lodge for the regional Americanism essay contest. Her essay won 1st place in the regional competition for 5th and 6th graders. Her essay then went on to the state level competition where she placed third in the state. The national competition results will be announced this July.



Veterans' Day at the 150th Indiana State Fair

It's summertime, and we all know what that means, its time for the 150th annual Indiana State Fair.

On August 20th the Indiana State Fair will honor those who have proudly served our country with multiple events around the Fairgrounds. The Veterans Memorial Service will be held from 1 p.m. - 3 p.m. on the WFMS Free Stage. Veterans will also be the honored guests featured in the Daily Parade at 6:30 p.m. This will be a day of tribute to honor those Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, Airman, Guardsmen and Reservists who have been deployed during the past year, 2005-2006.

All US servicemen and women who attend in uniform will be admitted free to the fair on Veterans Day. Discounted State Fair admission tickets are available for Veterans Day, through local veterans' organizations or Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs, in addition to the \$2 discount for veterans and their families (must have discount coupon for each person) there will also be FREE PARKING!

State Approving Agency Corner

Veterans are learning more about the Montgomery GI Bill; however, there are still many others who are unaware of the possibilities. The traditional line of thinking is to use their benefits in pursuit of a college degree, but alternative options offer many opportunities in the present day job market. On-the-Job-Training (OJT), apprenticeships, non-college degree programs and flight training may offer greater appeal. Apprenticeships and OJT permit veterans to work full time while receiving benefit awards that essentially fill the salary gap between that of a trainee and fully qualified journeyman. This enables the individual to concentrate on their training while avoiding the typical financial restraints of a lower paid trainee. An OJT program can require six months to two years to complete, and an apprenticeship can last up to five years.

For an Indiana veteran to utilize their GI Bill in any of these programs, it must be approved by either the Commission on Proprietary Education (COPE) or the Indiana Department of Veterans' Affairs, State Approving Agency (SAA). Both agencies were established to monitor and supervise these programs to ensure they meet Federal and State requirements for quality education to eligible veterans. Links to approved programs for each agency can be found on the Department of Veterans' Affairs web site; COPE: (<http://www.in.gov/cope/directory/valist.html>) SAA: (http://www.in.gov/veteran/saa/lists/search_page.html). Individuals desiring to pursue a program not listed on either site can contact our offices with details of the organization, and we will actively pursue attempts to acquire agency approval.

These links can also be a valuable tool for job seekers who are not eligible for GI Bill benefits, but have skills they wish to transfer into a new career of choice. Another avenue that provides leverage for veterans seeking employment within the trades is Helmets-to-Hardhats. In many cases veterans receive preference/points for hiring consideration. Upon selection, he/she can then apply for GI Bill benefits if they are eligible and the program is approved for such purposes.

Critical elements to the Montgomery GI Bill are eligibility, utilization of benefits within ten years from date of separation from active duty service and understanding how it can be used for many rewarding opportunities. Veterans who are uncertain of their eligibility status should contact the Federal VA at 1-888-442-4551 and provide their service information to a representative who will advise them of their eligibility status. We need to ensure the word gets out to our honored troops. There are many veterans who may have forgotten about their contributions when they first enlisted in the military, and many reservists/guardsmen who have deployed since September 11, 2001 are unaware of their eligibility. The latter group is now also eligible for benefits even if they did not contribute to the program. President Bush made this possible by enacting changes to the laws for our service members fighting the war on terror.

As we move forward, our agencies are picking up the pace to network more closely with COPE, Department of Workforce Development, veterans representatives, and service officers to share information on potential program approvals and those organizations actively hiring. Our combined efforts improve benefits for our veterans, local economy and our effectiveness as a team serving Indiana veterans. If you have questions concerning proprietary education contact Marsha Thornton at 317-232-1327 or Tara Adams at 317-234-3307. Representing the SAA Northern Region is myself, Ron Rousch at 317-232-3914 and for the Southern Region, please contact Vicki Baker at 317-232-3916.

In-State Tuition Rates Give Service Members and Families a Break

Forty-four states, including Indiana, have laws that provide currently-serving military service members and their families the opportunity to attend state run community colleges and universities at a greatly reduced rate. Indiana state-sponsored schools offer military service members and their families, regardless of their home-of-record, the same tuition rate as state residents. Service members can save thousands in tuition and fees.

This is one of the lesser-known benefits offered by Indiana to the military. While it is not specific to Hoosier veterans, it is a benefit offered to any service member who is currently serving in our armed forces while residing in Indiana, and the benefit is also extended to their eligible family members.

Homelessness a Threat For Iraq Vets

By VERENA DOBNIK, Associated Press Writer

Herold Noel had nowhere to call home after returning from military service in Iraq. He slept in his Jeep, taking care to find a parking space where he wouldn't get a ticket.

"Then the nightmares would start," says the 26-year-old former Army private first class, who drove a fuel truck in Iraq. "I saw a baby decapitated when it was run over by a truck — I relived that every night."

Across America on any given evening, hundreds of veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan like Noel are homeless; according to government estimates. The reasons for their plight are many. For some, residual stress from daily insurgent attacks and roadside bombs makes it tough to adjust to civilian life; some can't navigate government assistance programs; others simply can't afford a house or apartment. They are living on the edge in towns and cities big and small, from Washington State to California and Florida. Some of the hardest hit are in New York City, where housing costs "can be very tough," says Peter Dougherty, head of the federal government's Homeless Veterans Program. Studio apartments routinely exceed \$1,000 a month — no small sum for veterans trying to land on their feet.

As a member of the National Guard, Nadine Beckford patrolled New York train stations after the Sept. 11 attacks, and then served a treacherous year in the Gulf region. But when she returned home from Iraq, she found her storage locker had been emptied of all of her belongings and her bank account had been depleted. She believes her boyfriend took everything and "just vanished." Six months after her return to America, she lives in a homeless shelter in Brooklyn, sharing a room with eight other women and attending a job training program. Her parents live in Jamaica and are barely making ends meet, she says.

"I'm just an ordinary person who served. I'm not embarrassed about my homelessness, because the circumstances that created it were not my fault," says Beckford, 30, who was a military-supply specialist at a U.S. base in Iraq — a sitting duck for around-the-clock attacks "where hell was your home."

It was a "hell" familiar to Noel during his eight months in Iraq. But it didn't stop when he returned home to New York last year and couldn't find a job to support his wife and three children. Without enough money to rent an apartment, he turned to the housing programs for vets, "but they were overbooked," Noel says. While he was in Iraq, his family had lived in military housing in Georgia. In New

York, they ended up in a Bronx shelter "with people who were just out of prison, and with roaches," Noel says. "I'm a young black man from the ghetto, but this was culture shock. This is not what I fought for, what I almost died for. This is not what I was supposed to come home to."

There are about 200,000 homeless vets in the United States, according to government figures. About 10 percent are from either the 1991 Gulf War or the current one, about 40 percent are Vietnam veterans, and most of the others served when the country was not officially at war.

"In recent years, we've tried to reach out sooner to new veterans who are having problems with post-traumatic stress, depression or substance abuse, after seeing combat," says Dougherty. "These are the veterans who most often end up homeless."

About 350 nonprofit service organizations are working with the Department of Veterans Affairs to help veterans. But the veterans still land on a hard bottom line: Almost half of America's 2.7 million disabled veterans receive \$337 or less a month in benefits, according to the government. Fewer than one-tenth are rated 100 percent disabled, meaning they get \$2,393 a month, tax free.

"And only those who receive that 100 percent benefit rating can survive in New York," says J.B. White, a 36-year-old former Marine who served with a National Guard unit in Iraq. His colon was removed after he was diagnosed with severe ulcerative colitis, which civilian medical experts believe started in Iraq under the stress of war.

"I'd be homeless if it weren't for the support of my family," says White, who is trying to win benefits from the VA. He also helps others, like Beckford, as head of a Manhattan-based social service agency that finds non-government housing for vets.

Noel now attends a program to get work in studio sound production. He was the protagonist of the documentary film "When I Came Home," which was named best New York-made documentary at the Tribeca Film Festival this year. Just after the news reports about his plight, he learned the government was granting him the 100 percent disability compensation he sought — after being turned down. Noel doesn't blame the Army, which "helped make my dreams come true," he says, recalling the military base life in Georgia and in Korea that his family enjoyed before his deployment to Iraq.

"I had a house, a car — they gave me everything they promised me," he says. "Now it's up to the government and the people we're defending to take care of their soldiers."

Director of State Approving Agency David Gray Resigns



David Gray, Director of State Approving Agency has resigned effective July 8, 2006 to pursue a position with the Department of Veterans Affairs Education office. David's new role will be Education Compliance Specialist where he will perform audits on schools where veterans are using GI Bill benefits.

Long Time IDVA Administrative Assistant Judy Holgate Retires



Judy Holgate has retired after 31 years of dedicated service to the State of Indiana, 12 of which were with IDVA. Though she is retiring from state government, Judy will next be working for the DAV at their department headquarters on 16th Street.

Cell Phones For Soldiers

Do you have an old cell phone that you are not using that is just sitting there collecting dust? Why not donate it to Cell Phones For Soldiers.

Teenagers Brittany and Robbie Bergquist began Cell Phones for Soldiers in April 2004 after they saw a news report about how expensive it was for a soldier stationed in Iraq to call home. Since then, they have raised more than a million dollars. From cash contributions and money acquired by recycling donated used cell phones, the organization buys calling cards and distributes them to deployed or deploying servicemembers. The organization has over 4,000 sites nationwide where people can drop off their used cell phones. They are also now accepting ink jet cartridges to recycle. All funds to benefit the Cell Phones For Soldiers.

To locate a drop off site in Indiana visit their web site: www.cellphonesforsoldiers.com

Bloomington man to get Bronze Star for actions in Vietnam

The Associated Press
July 11, 2006 12:21 PM



A postal worker wounded in Vietnam and thought dead by his comrades is scheduled to receive a Bronze Star this week.

Michael "Mick" Mitchell, 58, suffered a head wound when he was hit by shrapnel during an enemy attack in 1968, and his memory of the battle remains fuzzy. After he was wounded, a fellow soldier set him up against a tree and "told me to keep shooting," Mitchell told The Herald-Times for a Tuesday story.

Armed with an M-16 rifle, Mitchell successfully held off the enemy and allowed all of the injured to be evacuated, said Leo Lipsie, a member of Mitchell's outfit. Mitchell returned to Bloomington after recovering from his injuries and took a job with the U.S. Postal Service that he has held for 30 years. He lost contact with his buddies until a few years ago.

"We all thought that Mick was dead," said Lipsie, a Houston resident, who was a member of Mitchell's reconnaissance platoon.

Lipsie said he and others submitted Mitchell's name to the military so he could receive the Bronze Star medal, expected to be awarded during a ceremony at a reunion of 1st Cavalry Division veterans in Louisville, Ky., Wednesday.

"It's something he deserved," Lipsie said.

He, Mitchell and a third member of the platoon now speak daily, Lipsie said.

"We talk about the good times," Mitchell said. "We don't dwell on the bad times."

Indiana MIA Laid to Rest after 34 Years.

Name: Donald Russell Hoskins
Rank/Branch: E6/US Air Force
Unit: CCK Air Force Base, Taiwan - TDY to 345th
Tactical Airlift Squadron,
Tan Son Nhut ABSV
Date of Birth: 05 January 1929
Home City of Record: Madison IN
Date of Loss: 26 April 1972
Country of Loss: South Vietnam
Loss Coordinates: 113803N 1063547E (XT745866)
Status (in 1973): Killed/Body Not Recovered
Category: 2
Acft/Vehicle/Ground: C130E
Refno: 1837

Other Personnel In Incident: Harry Amesbury; Calvin E. Cooke; Richard E. Dunn;
Richard L. Russell (all missing); Kurt F. Weisman
(remains returned 1975)

Source: Compiled by Homecoming II Project 31
April 1990 from one or more of
the following: raw data from U.S. Government
agency sources, correspondence
with POW/MIA families, published sources, interviews.
Updated by the P.O.W.NETWORK 1998.

REMARKS: CRASH - 1 REM RCV - N SIGN
SUBJ - J

SYNOPSIS: From the CCK Air Force Base base
in Taiwan, C-130 crews flew to different locations,
including Korea, Borneo, Indonesia, Japan, Africa,
etc. But most trips were to various bases in Vietnam
for 3 week stays. Then the men would return to the
base in Taiwan for 3 days. On one such Vietnam tour,
one C130E had a crew consisting of Harry A. Amesbury,
pilot; Richard L. Russell, navigator, Richard E. Dunn,
loadmaster, Calvin C. Cooke, Donald R. Hoskins,
and Kurt F. Weisman, crew members. This crew was
TDY to 345th Tactical Airlift Squadron at Tan Son Nhut
Airbase, South Vietnam.

On April 26, 1972, Amesbury's aircraft and crew
were making a night drop of supplies to South Viet-

namese forces trapped in An Loc, South Vietnam
(about 65 miles from Saigon). The provincial capitol
had been under siege by North Vietnamese and Viet
Cong forces off and on since early April. Supply
drops and air support were critically needed and often
hampered by hostile forces outside the city. Upon
approach to the drop site at a very low level, the
aircraft was hit by enemy fire and was reported to be
down. The men onboard the aircraft were declared
Missing in Action.

Supply drops were generally accomplished in
one of two ways, both requiring that the plane be
airborne, and flying at very low altitudes. Using one
method, parachutes attached to the supply pallets
were deployed. As the plane flew over, the
parachutes pulled the cargo from the plane. Using another
method, a hook attached to the cargo was dropped
from the plane, affixed to some firm fixture on the
ground. As the plane departed the area, the cargo was
pulled out of the plane. Both required considerable
skill under the best of circumstances.

According to the Department of the Air Force, it
received unspecified information that contained evidence
of death for the crew members on May 5, 1972.
The status of the missing men was changed to Killed
in Action/Body Not Recovered.

In February, 1975, non-American friendly forces
recovered and returned the remains of Kurt Weisman.
No information surfaced on the rest of the crew.
All onboard had been assumed killed in the downing
of the plane. If this is the case, why weren't the other
remains recovered as well?

Of the nearly 2500 Americans still missing in
Southeast Asia, most can be accounted for one way
or another. The U.S. Government has received nearly
10,000 reports of Americans still held prisoner in
Southeast Asia, yet has not been able to find a way to
free them, or to obtain information on a significant
number of other Americans who may have perished.



The Indiana Operation Enduring Freedom/ Operation Iraqi Free- dom Memorial Wall

Following are the latest additions to the Indiana OEF/OIF Memorial Wall located in the Indiana Government Center-South in the hallway outside the offices of IDVA. This is a list of the casualties since the wall was dedicated on January 9, 2006.



U.S. Marine Staff Sergeant **Eric A. McIntosh**, 29, Indianapolis, Indiana

Sgt. McIntosh was among three Marines killed in Anbar province Sunday, April 2, 2006. According to a Department of Defense news release, all three were assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force. They were conducting "combat operations," according to the military. A former Roncalli High School student who found purpose and passion as a U.S. Marine, he was killed a month after beginning his second tour in the war. He had been in the Marines for 10 years and planned to continue his military career. He finished his first tour in Iraq in September and returned March 6, 2006, three days before his 29th birthday.

U.S. Marine Corps, Corporal **Eric Lueken**, 23, Dubois, Indiana



April 22, 2006, The Department of Defense said Cpl. Lueken died in combat operations in Iraq's Anbar province. He was assigned to 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, 3rd Marine Division, III Marine Expeditionary Force based at Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii. Lueken, a 2001 graduate of Northeast Dubois High School, he joined the Marine Corps in October 2003. After his tour in Afghanistan, Lueken told his mother he was not taking life for granted anymore.



Indiana Army National Guard Sgt. **Joseph E. Proctor**, 38, Indianapolis, Indiana

Assigned to the 638th Battalion (Aviation), Indiana Army National Guard, Shelbyville, Ind.; killed May 3 when a suicide, vehicle-borne, improvised explosive de-

vice detonated near his observation post during dismounted combat patrol operations in Tammin, Iraq.



U.S. Marine Corps Lance Corporal **David J. Grames**, Fort Wayne, Indiana

Assigned to the 2nd Tank Battalion, 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Lejeune, N.C.; died May 11, 2006 in a vehicle accident in the Anbar province. He is a 2003 graduate of Elmhurst High School, Fort Wayne, Indiana and was on the wrestling team.



Indiana Army National Guard Staff Sergeant **Richard A. Blakley**, 34, Avon, Indiana

Assigned to Company E, 38th Main Support Battalion, Indianapolis, Indiana, but deployed with 738th Area Support Medical Company, Monticello, Indiana. Killed Tuesday, June 6, 2006 as a result of small arms fire while on a dismounted patrol near Al Khalidiyah, Iraq. Indiana Governor Mitch Daniels presented Blakley with a Purple Heart during a ceremony in Baghdad on April 15, 2006 when the governor visited Iraq and Afghanistan. Blakley had been injured by a sniper in January, was treated locally and returned to active duty the same day.



Staff Sgt. **Paul S. Pabla**, 23, from Battery B, 3rd Battalion, 139th Field Artillery, Kempton, Indiana.

Deployed with Headquarters and Headquarters Service Battery, 2nd Battalion, 150th Field Artillery, Bloomington, Indiana was killed Monday, July 3, as a result of sniper fire while on a dismounted patrol in Mosul, Iraq. Staff Sgt. Pabla was a resident of Fort Wayne, Indiana.



CWO3 **William T. Flanigan**, Tennessee Army National Guard Co. R, 4-278th Armored Cavalry Regiment, Jackson TN

Native of Indianapolis, and a graduate from Indianapolis, Indiana Brebeuf Jesuit Preparatory School, was killed July 4, 2006 when an AH-64 Apache helicopter crashed shortly after takeoff from Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan, the military said.



Indiana Army National Guard Sergeant Major **Jeffery A. McLochlin** of Rochester stationed in Afghanistan.

Killed July 5, 2006, he was on his second tour of duty and had been on military leave from the Plymouth Police Department since September. He leaves behind a wife and three children. Plymouth's other officers planned to wear black bands over their badges in honor of the fallen soldier, police Chief Jim Cox said.



Director's Comments

Forty-five states and five territories maintain veterans service agencies which are recognized to present claims to the VA. Indiana is one of the states which does not. Indiana Administrative Code 915 1-1-4 states that ... "no power of attorney shall run to...the Director...of the Department of Veterans' Affairs...for the prosecution of any claim for benefits before the Veterans' Administration." That IAC seems to contradict Indiana Code IC 10-17-1-7 which pertains to the Director as an agent of a veteran. Section 7 of that code states: "The director of veterans' affairs may act as agent of a veteran under a power of attorney authorizing the director to act on behalf of the veteran in obtaining a benefit or an advantage provided under Indiana law." For that reason we have asked the administration to strike the wording in IAC 915 1-1-4 which removes the power of attorney from the Director and the CVSOs and will ask that IC 10-17-1-7 be amended to read, "The director of veterans' affairs may act as agent of a veteran under a power of attorney authorizing the director to act on behalf of the veteran in obtaining a benefit or an advantage provided under state and federal laws." Those changes should open the door for Indiana to become recognized by VA as an accredited agency for the prosecution of veteran's claims.

Additionally, we have asked that Indiana Code 10-17-1-6 be changed to read that the Director, Deputy Director and State Service Officers of IDVA must be:

(A) Honorably discharged veterans who have at least six (6) months active service in the Armed Forces of the United States and shall be citizens of the United States and the State of Indiana.

(B) Other employees of IDVA may be the spouses, surviving spouses, parents or children of an individual described in clause (A).

(C) Individuals who do not meet the criteria outlined above and who were employed prior to the effective date of this law may be retained in their current position, but will not be allowed to apply for future positions.

(D) An employee must be otherwise qualified for the job concerned.

We have suggested that Indiana Code 10-17-1-9 be changed to read:

County service officers, city service officers and assistant service officers shall (1) have the same qualifications and be subject to the same rules as the Director, Deputy Director and State Service Officers of IDVA; (2) Other employees of the county/city service office shall have the same qualifications as other employees of IDVA and; (3) all serve under the direction and supervision of the director of veterans' affairs.

And finally, we have suggested that the state define what is a veteran for Indiana veteran's benefits purposes, by using the same criteria as the federal VA for the definition of a veteran, and we have submitted some suggested word changes pertaining to eligibility for the Remission of Fees program for those veterans who served during periods other than those recognized by the VA as wartime periods.



Hoosier Veterans' Seamless Transition Program Workshop

April 29, 2006

Portage High School, Portage, Indiana

On Saturday, April 29, 2006, the first Indiana Hoosier Veterans' Seamless Transition Program Workshop took place at Portage High School, Portage Indiana.

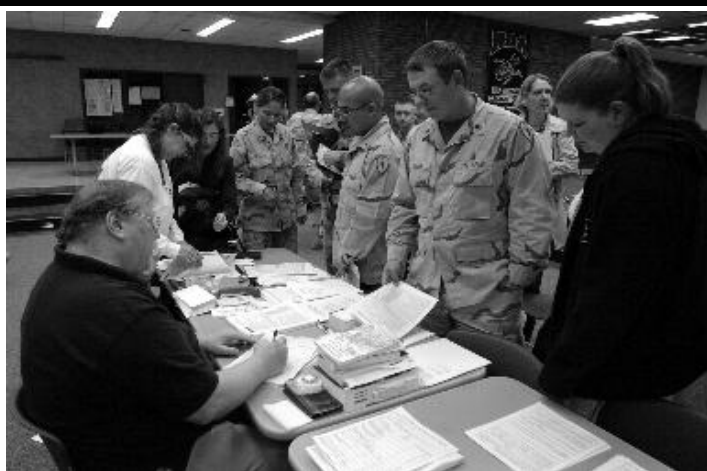
Numerous state and federal agencies teamed-up under the direction of the Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs to provide comprehensive claims and applications assistance to over 360 Indiana Guard men and women who had recently returned from Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The workshops were organized in order to fill the gap between the time of the demobilization briefings at Camp Atterbury, Edinburgh, Indiana, and the difficult period after the Guard member returns to work.

Future workshops will take place between 90 and 120 days after the Guardsman or Reservist's active duty orders end, and eventually will also include recently discharged active duty members of the U. S. Armed Forces.



Indiana Department of Veterans Affairs Director, Tom Applegate, briefs the first wave of troops on Saturday morning.



Lake County VSO secretary, Patricia Amerski, and Porter County VSO, Jim Lynch, helped out at the IDVA Table.



Over 360 National Guard members processed through this VA station in this first-ever Indiana Hoosier Veterans' Seamless Transition Program Workshop



Amerski (standing), Lynch (seated). Also behind the tables, VFW's Paul Curtice, DAV's Eric McGinnis, American Legion's Bonnie McKinney, and AMVETS Lamonte Crenshaw.

Calendar of Upcoming Events

August 9 - 20

Indiana State Fair

August 20

Veterans Day at the Fair

September 22

Veterans Stand down at HVAF Indianapolis, call 317-951-0688 for more information.

Free Adobe Software

Many CVSOs have been looking for a way to save documents viewed with their Adobe Acrobat Reader. The answer might be this free software from SourceForge.net. So, if you're looking for an easy way to create PDF files without the hefty price tag of Adobe Acrobat, give this program a try.

PDFCreator lets you send formatted documents and have them retain their appearance on another monitor or printer. As the name suggests, the download adds a PDF creator under your list of printers. Simply select a printable Windows file, print to the PDFCreator and your

document will save in PDF format. You can then read, print or e-mail the finished product.

We've tried it out and it works great.

Go to: <http://sourceforge.net/projects/pdfcreator>

IDVA Update Submissions Wanted

Submission ideas are being sought for future issues of the IDVA Update. If there is something that you would like to share from your county, organization, etc. , or would like to see featured here please e-mail Kris Bertrand at kabertrand@dva.in.gov with your submission.

Did You Know?

Did you know that as of October 2005, there are over 32,000 living women veterans in the State of Indiana but only about 1/3 of this population has applied for and/or uses their VA benefits?

More details next month.
